

Ethics & Medical Research

Justice for Children & The Kennedy Krieger Institute Lead Paint Study

As you read the material for the next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently to these issues in the next class meeting.

Readings

- Merle Spriggs, “Canaries in the Mines: Children, Risk, Non-therapeutic Research, and Justice” (PDF on webpage).
- David Buchanan & Franklin Miller, “Justice and Fairness in the Kennedy Krieger Institute Lead Paint Study” (PDF on webpage).

Questions

1. What reasons do the researchers provide for their decisions during the Kennedy Krieger Institute lead paint study? Does this rationale share any similarities with the ones made by Drs. Southham and Mandel at the Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital and/or Dr. Krugman at the Willowbrook State School?
2. Why is Spriggs not convinced by the defenses of the lead paint study? Even so, why is she also not satisfied with the Court of Appeals condemnation of the study? In her view, what are the real ethical problems here?
3. Why are Buchanan and Miller not convinced by arguments like Sprigg’s? How do they justify their claim that sometimes it is ethically permissible to test interventions that are less costly and efficacious than existing standards of care?
4. Given that they reach different conclusions, Spriggs and Buchanan/Miller cannot both be right. Where exactly in their respective arguments do they disagree? Which position is supported by the strongest and most compelling argument?